

Hants., and Devon, I had the good fortune to beat a specimen from a mature oak in Windsor Great Park on 4th July last. Accompanying it were *Scaptia fuscula* Müll. singly and its relatively common congener *A. oculus* Panz. more freely. It is the second example of *A. brevicornis* taken by me in the locality (and the third that I have seen there) — making, with singletons by two other collectors, the fifth hitherto known form the Windsor area (see Allen, 1959, *Ent. mon. Mag.* 95: 120). As my previous specimen was taken on 11th September, the two captures between them probably span almost the whole activity-period of the species, which is a long one for such a rare insect. — A. A. ALLEN.

THE WHITE ADMIRAL: *LADOGA CAMILLA* L. IN WEST KENT IN 1984. — Two observations on the terrace of my flat at Shoreham during 1984 may possibly be of interest. On 14th August a very worn and elderly male *Ladoga camilla* alighted and after being photographed, died. Whilst this species is not, I believe, unknown in this area, it does not normally visit gardens. To-day, 29th September, an apparently fresh female *Colias crocea* Geoff. settled on my verandah roof long enough for positive identification before flying off. This species was common enough last year, but this was my only sighting in 1984. — H. J. WILDBORE, 2 Shoreham House, Shoreham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7RY.

COMMUNAL CONJUGATION IN *TIPULA PALUDOSA* MG. (DIPTERA: TIPULIDAE). — During the night of 8th-9th September 1984, whilst running a 125watt lamp on a sheet at Great Bookham Common, Surrey, several *Tipula paludosa* very rapidly assembled, including several pairs *in copula*. To the amusement of the assembled company, three examples of this crane-fly were observed coupled, (tripled?), on the sheet, two males and a single female. One of the males had successfully paired with the female, and these two insects were aligned tail to tail at an angle of 180 degrees to each other. The second male was observed several times attempting to pair with the already attached female, by aligning itself parallel to her curling his abdomen around in frenzied efforts to make contact. After a few minutes he was apparently successful in this venture, having clasped the female's genitalia in such a manner that it was quite impossible to see which male was in fact carrying out the vital act. After some ten minutes I boxed the threesome, and they remained coupled in the pill-box until the following morning. Out of interest I picked up the bundle of insects holding the wings of each individual in turn. It was soon apparent in this manner that the coupling was firm, and not even a moderately sharp shake or two could separate any of the males from the female. Examination with a hand lens showed that each male was clasping an equal portion of the available female genitalia, and had I not always assumed such a feat impossible in insects, I would have been quite convinced that both males were actively mating with the same female at the same

time. Following the initial frantic activity on the part of each, both males were at once sedate as soon as "coupling" had occurred.

I had always assumed that pheromone production by female insects ceased as soon as a male had coupled, thereby avoiding the undesirable attentions of further males. Certainly this appears to be the case in that classic pheromone producer *Saturnia pavonia* Linnaeus, the emperor moth, when males instantly lose interest in the female as soon as she has been paired, (although they may still hang around the scent on adjacent objects). Perhaps then this is not necessarily the case! — C. W. PLANT, Assistant Curator, Natural Sciences (Biology), Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London, E15 4LZ.

SIBINIA ARENARIAE STEPH. (COL.: CURCULIONIDAE) IN WEST KENT. — On 17th August last, while grubbing under and at the roots of herbage on a fairly dry track near a creek of the R. Darent near its confluence with the Thames in the Crayford Marshes area, I was pleased to come upon a fresh example of the pretty little weevil named above, and shortly afterwards another. Given time, a series could probably have been obtained. This is regarded as a very local coastal insect associated with '*Arenaria maritima*' — a plant whose name I do not find given by modern authorities; I had previously met with only two specimens. In the present case the plant in question is what I believe to be the related *Spergularia salina* J. & C. Presl. *Sibinia arenariae* would seem to be new to West Kent, though recorded from the extreme west of East Kent (Sheerness, in VCH list, 1908) and is doubtless common in suitable coastal and estuarine sites in the vice-county. — A. A. ALLEN.

THE DEATH'S HEAD HAWKMOTH: ACHERONTIA ATROPOS L. IN N. SOMERSET. — Two fully grown larvae of this moth were taken in a domestic garden at Hinton Charterhouse near Bath (VC.6) on 18th September 1984. One was feeding on potato haulm, whilst the other was dug up as it was beginning to pupate. — B. W. MOORE, F.R.E.S., Church Cottage, Church Lane, Batheaston, Bath.

AN UNUSUAL ABERRATION OF DIAPHORA MENDICA CLERCK IN HERTFORDSHIRE — I would like to report the capture of a most unusual male specimen of *D. mendica* (The Muslin) which, after comparison with the specimens housed at the British Museum of Natural History and discussion with D. Carter thereof, is best described as approaching aberration *rustica* Hb. The specimen was taken in one of our Harpenden light traps (Geescroft II, Site No. 99, O.S. Grid Ref. TL 131 127) on the night of 2/3 May, 1984 and was the only specimen of this species present in the catch for that night.

This pale buff-grey aberration is normally associated with Ireland, and its presence in England is therefore certainly worthy of note. — ADRIAN M. RILEY, Rothamsted Insect Survey, Entomology Department, Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts.